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## **District Attorney Jackie Lacey Receives National Award for Mental Health Project**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey was recognized today by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for spearheading efforts to help and treat people with mental illnesses who are at risk of being incarcerated.

District Attorney Lacey received the Criminal Justice Award for her leadership in seeking to divert non-violent offenders into treatment.

"I am thankful for this award but we have a lot of work ahead of us to ensure that the mentally ill can receive the care they need," District Attorney Lacey said. "The use of jails as a mental health ward is inefficient, ineffective and in many cases it is inhumane."

The award was presented at the NAMI national convention in San Francisco. Also recognized at the ceremony was former California Senate President Darrell Steinberg.

"Senator Steinberg's and District Attorney Lacey's leadership and influence extend far beyond California's borders," said NAMI Executive Director Mary Giliberti.

"Senator Steinberg and District Attorney Lacey have demonstrated the kind of vision and hard work needed in every state, county, city and town if we are to build a mental health care system that truly embraces the future," she said.

District Attorney Lacey is founder and chair of the Los Angeles County Criminal Justice Mental Health Project, designed to evaluate the needs of those with mental illness at risk of entering the criminal justice system. The task force also has worked to identify and evaluate available resources and develop coordinated interagency responses.

In putting the task force together, the District Attorney said, "It is inhumane to lock up the people who are mentally ill, because we're punishing them for being too sick to solve their problem by themselves."

She added, “The Criminal Justice Mental Health Project is committed to leading the way to creating and implementing a plan that will divert people from jail who belong in a hospital or in supportive housing.”

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### **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.